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# Harvest Song

By JEAN TOOMER

I am a reaper whose muscles set at sun-down. All my oats are cradled.  
But I am too chilled, and too fatigued to bind them. And I hunger.

I crack a grain between my teeth. I do not taste it.  
I have been in the fields all day. My throat is dry. I hunger.

My eyes are caked with dust of oat-fields at harvest-time.  
I am a blind man who stares across the hills, seeking stack'd fields  
of other harvesters.

It would be good to see them...crook'd, split, and iron-ring'd handles  
of the scythes. ..It would be good to see them, dust-caked and  
blind. I hunger.

(Dusk is a strange fear'd sheath their blades are dull'd in.)  
My throat is dry. And should I call, a cracked grain like the oats  
...eoho—

I fear to call. What should they hear me, and offer me their grain,  
oats, or wheat or corn? I have been in the fields all day. I fear  
I could not taste it. I fear knowledge of my hunger.

My ears are caked with dust of oat-fields at harvest-time.  
I am a deaf man who strains to hear the calls of other harvesters whose  
throats are also dry.

It would be good to hear their songs...reapers of the sweet-stalked  
cane, cutters of the corn...even though their throats cracked, and  
the strangeness of their voices deafened me.

I hunger. My throat is dry. Now that the sun has set and I am chilled,  
I fear to call. (Eoho, my brothers!)

I am a reaper. (Eoho!) All my oats are cradled. But I am too fatigued  
to bind them. And I hunger. I crack a grain. It has no taste to  
it. My throat is dry...

O my brothers, I beat my palms, still soft, against the stubble of my  
harvesting. (You beat your soft palms, too.) My pain is sweet.  
Sweeter than the oats or wheat or corn. It will not bring me  
knowledge of my hunger.



# The Beast

By EDWARD H. PFEIFFER

AH, it is Sunday... Ah, thank the dear God, says Michel to himself. I have a little time alone, a little time to rest... Michel looks at himself in the mirror, a little specked mirror, hanging a-tilt on the top of a scratched walnut bureau in his front room... four stories above the street... below there the children are making such a noise... Michel touches the sides of his head, then pulls at his pointed gray beard... He is looking in the mirror... and he sees his hands on the pointed gray beard... Michel is very proud of his beard, but it is getting gray, very gray... And he does not like the looks of his face, no, not at all... It is an animal's face... yes, an animal's... but what of that? All men are animals...yet that face there, that face in the mirror, yes, it is the face...the face of a sheep... A sheep?... He looks again...most assuredly a sheep...With a shrug Michel turns away...

The wife is out with the children... so you see it is quiet in the little rooms...oh, these dark, dirty, mean little rooms in the great city tenement...Ah, to be alone...yes, it is good...it does not happen often...the alarm-clock, it says three o'clock in twenty minutes... Michel does a little figuring, quickly, in his mind: yes, probably two hours and twenty minutes he will have for himself... That is very good...very good...

Michel sits down in an armchair, of

which one arm hangs somewhat broken...well, not broken exactly, no, but you must not lean on it...His wife often screams at him, "Michel, do you hear, you? You are leaning on that arm there!"...That is what she says, the exact words, how funny!...Now if he meant to lean on it, if he did so purposely, but...He jumps up from the chair, feels a sweat breaking out all over him...Why, just then, he did not mean it, but, yes, he was leaning on it, and it creaked...His eyes wander about the room for another chair... Then he smiles, gathers himself...No need, good, she is out...

His fingers begin to twitch...he looks at them...What can those fingers be wanting? Ah, yes, to be sure, a cigarette. He puts his hand into his change-pocket...He thought so, not one cent... and there are no cigarettes in the house...Well, no cigarette then...It is too bad, too bad, such a quiet Sunday too... But it is not to be helped...The wife...ah, but he must not think of her... no, this is a time of peace...rest, rest, that is the thing...quiet...

On a little table lies a foreign language paper...He picks it up, folds it, leans back on the good arm of the chair...What is this on the front page? News of war, war in his home country...Will there ever be peace in the world? War, war, war, disgusting... Bah!

He rises. In the bottom drawer of

the old bureau he finds a pack of cards. He begins a game of solitaire... He plays solitaire for nearly two hours... Not once does he win a hand... not once does he cheat the cards... No, if it does not come, it does not come... Maybe he will have the luck next time... He puts the cards together in a pile. He holds them firmly in his left hand... He is squeezing them very hard... His thick veins bulge blue... He looks at the King of Diamonds, lying on top. It seems to him that the King of Diamonds has an ugly, yes, a spiteful glance in his eyes... Michel takes the card and is about to tear it angrily in half... into many pieces... Then, isn't it funny? Across his mind darts the thought: there is no money in your change-pocket... If he spoils the card, he will spoil the deck, and where will he get the money for another deck? Yes, where?

\* \* \*

Monday morning... Michel with steps that rise and fall, so and so... they make no sound... enters the office of Stefan Konratowski... Esther, the typist, is taking the cover from her machine... "Good morning," says Michel. "Good morning," she answers... He hangs up his hat, he looks in the mirror... Ah, miserable, miserable, a sheep... bah! a sheep...

Michel busies himself at once... Esther makes several remarks... Now and again she tries to begin a conversation, but Michel is busy, very deeply busy... among a pile of papers... he reads, he sorts, he scribbles notes... he picks some from this pile and lays them on that pile... It is a little table he has to write on... It is quite a ways from the window... and he faces the mirror... he keeps his eyes away from

the mirror... all the time that he works, he remembers that he does not wish to look into that mirror... No, in that mirror there is a sheep...

Presently Konratowski... What a fine black beard he has, and eye-glasses on a long black ribbon, and a cravat fastened with a gold pin, a horse-shoe... and he lays across his flat-top desk a cane... a silver-headed cane.

"Good morning, Sir," says Michel, going on with his duties.

"Michel, the papers! Those papers about the... Don't you know what I want? You are getting stupid, stupid! Michel, right away!"

"You mean the papers about—" begins Michel, fumbling among a pile on his desk.

"Of course, the papers about—you know what I mean. Am I to remember the name of every carrot-headed imbecile who writes to this office?"

Michel finds the papers... All day he is very busy. Konratowski has no further cause to find fault... His clerk is performing his duties... without being heard, without venturing an opinion, or any suggestion... For eight years Michel has been doing that... He has no doubt he has been satisfactory... He thinks he has given satisfaction. The roaring Konratowski never has said so, never once in eight years praised him... Yes, Michel knows that... full well he knows that... "But," says Michel, slowly to himself, "I... cannot... have... been... entirely... not entirely... unsatisfactory... or he... would not have kept me... all... this... while." Michel thinks that over many times. It seems good logic.

\* \* \*

Saturday... two in the afternoon...



Konratowski, short, fierce-looking, pompous, coughs a little now and then importantly at his heavy, spacious desk... combs his hair, his beard, his moustache with a pocket comb... Michel dips his pen and makes a note on one card after another... places it back into the file... There must be thousands... thousands of these cards... By God, one of these days Michel is going to count them... He will figure out how many cards he has handled a day, a year, yes, he will figure out how many he has handled in eight years...

Michel is at his little table. Under some papers is a cigarette, hidden... Now and then he watches to be sure that it does not roll off, and also to be sure that it is hidden, well hidden... Konratowski left it half-finished on his desk before lunch... When he had gone, when Esther was out of the room, washing, Michel had in a glance taken in all the doors and windows, and then quietly, but quickly, snatched it from the desk. Michel had smoken away quite a bit of it... but there is still maybe five minutes, maybe ten minutes' enjoyment left in that little roll of thin white paper... Yes, it is still there... He—

The door of the office opens.

"Ah, good afternoon, Mr. Konratowski."

"Ah, Madame," says Konratowski, rising. Michel's eyes shift a moment toward his employer. He encounters a fierce, vicious glare. Michel shrinks into himself among his papers. Esther's machine pauses... In the silence Michel waits for it to begin again... It begins... Esther is minding her business then... Good...

"Eighteen dollars and fifty cents," says Konratowski.

The woman takes the bills and the silver piece out of the mouth of an envelope. She counts it all.

"Eighteen dollars and fifty cents," she repeats in a sharp, metallic voice that carries into every corner of the room, vibrating against a vase on the mantelpiece.

The woman turns on her heel, smiles at Esther, goes out... When the door shuts, Michel takes a scrap of paper out of the wastebasket and marks it up furiously with jots and shaded lines and crosses... He throws the paper back into the basket... bites his nail... and keeps at his work.

\* \* \*

Seven and a half years ago Michel and his wife quarreled... It was night... His wife fell asleep... Not so Michel... he lay awake thinking... "It was a swine's life he was leading, slaving for a slave-driver, who prided himself on his gentlemanly acquirements... acquirements, yes, a wide ribbon on his glasses, a cravat-pin and a silver-headed cane... and for fourteen dollars a week... all but two his wife kept... and she had lost her figure... and her face had grown fat... bloated like some nameless kind of fish"...

His wife turned in her sleep and kicked him. He kicked back. She did not feel it. She had not meant it. Well, as for him he had meant it... He kicked her again... She merely grunted in her sleep... That was the kind of feelings she had... He had married a lump of an ox... a chunk of thick, insensitive flesh... In the night she actually smelted...

Too much... He arose, dressed noiselessly... The clothes that were not slipped on properly in the dark he would



fix later, outside, somewhere...He was gone...

Hardly two days passed...the police found him...sure, into court, a judge...His wife and her two children with her...Her hair was dishevelled...Only a bit more than usual, Michel said to himself...but the judge did not know how she looked usually...How should he know?...To him she looked like a distracted, an abused woman...And so she was, she told the court so...

Never had Michel heard her talk so rapidly...and with what feeling she told about this brute of a husband... Michel tried to interrupt her once... he tried twice, as a matter of fact, but they silenced him...He found it no use to try to talk, so he listened...Gradually he became absorbed...that was an interesting chap, that husband his wife was describing. By the Lord God, it was a man fit to write a book about! Beat her, he did, pinched her black and blue, starved the children... Did he ever get drunk? the judge asked... Michel listened eagerly for the answer...Perhaps in a moment he would find himself a drunkard, too...Ho, ho! a jovial drunkard...Michel liked the thought of that...What! she said 'no', he was not a drunkard? Now wasn't that like the unfeeling huzzy...just to tell one bit of truth at the wrong time and spoil it all...

Now it was Michel's turn. "What have you to say for yourself?" asks the judge.

"She lies," said Michel.

The judge did not seem to hear Michel's answer. He asked questions. To every question Michel answered no louder, without change of expression, "She lies... She lies..."

The judge warns Michel that if he strikes his wife again it will mean imprisonment. Meanwhile he is to give his full week's pay to his wife every Saturday, when he receives them.

For seven and a half years every Saturday Konratowski chivalrously has been giving Michel's wages to his clerk's wife...Not one cent of the money that he earns does Michel ever touch... When he is in dire need of something she will buy it...Once a month, if she does not forget or if she is not angry with him, she will bring home a box of cigarettes...

It was his wife who had just taken his present week's wages...eighteen dollars and fifty cents...Michel sometimes imagines holding all that money...No, no, he does not really want it any longer...He does not trust himself...he would not know how to spend it...and he is sure that it would give him no pleasure...Quite sure.

\* \* \*

After supper a few nights later in the Konratowski household...Konratowski's son has lost his position at the garage...The lad's moustache is stubbly under his nose...His eyes are wide-open continually with a half-scared expression...He is not as intelligent as his father. No, but...well, out of work is he, hey?...Something to think of in the Konratowski household. Konratowski's wife rocks back and forth evidently eager to make her man think she is thinking...As a matter of fact she is waiting for the solution which she is sure he will find...The boy's wages are needed. There are four smaller children...

Konratowski pulls his fingers, they crack...He puffs his cigarette-smoke

high into the air, watches it curl to the ceiling, his head thrown back. His neck is as shaggy as an animal's.

"Well," he roars at length as if addressing a vast audience under a great rotunda, "It shall be this way; he shall have Michel's position. The fool is getting old...he is...well, is no longer as he used to be...he cannot...well, what do you know about my business? He is indifferent...I do not need... The reasons are mine. That is enough."

\* \* \*

"So you understand, Michel, after next Monday, we shall not need you any longer."

Konratowski pauses. Michel gazes blankly ahead, makes no reply.

"You hear?" asks Konratowski, annoyed at his clerk's stupid stare, "I say, Michel, you hear me?"

Michel is busy...He is gazing into the mirror...By the great God of lightning and thunder, a sheep, unmistakably a sheep...

\* \* \*

Michel on his way home that night smiles to himself... He is free then, isn't he? Maybe till he can find something, maybe his wife will work a little, take in washing or something like that...It is time...a little rest...It will do him good...Not his fault that he is sent packing...Of course, make way for the employer's son...Tell the wife tonight?...Yes?...No?...He will see.

Supper...bed-time...under the covers...Michel has said nothing but he is thinking...A rest at last...a rest...he has dreamed of it for years...He says a little prayer...one he had thought he had long forgotten...one

that he had repeated night after night during his childhood... When rest comes, peace, quiet, it is good to pray... It is good to thank the Lord God...He falls asleep...

\* \* \*

But the next night suddenly as he is about to fall asleep, as if it is a message from a great distance, blown by loud trumpets, it comes to him: "My wife will not work...It is not rest that is coming to me. It is disgrace, long barren idleness...I am an outcast... Too old for anyone else to take me... It is not rest, it is the jaw of a living Hell that opens before me."

He crawls out of bed, lights a match. In the mirror, he thought so: a sheep...

"Are you crazy, Michel?" calls his wife. To himself he mutters, "Maybe, maybe." He turns out the light. Back to bed...

A sheep, hey? says Michel to himself...All sorts of sheep crowd before him on the sheet of the unbroken darkness. He sees them in clusters on sunny hill-sides, browsing...he sees them sleeping in the folds at night...he sees them driven in storm, wildly bleating...pitiless thunder and angry lightning-shafts... "The Lord is my shepherd...the Lord is my shepherd," he repeats the phrase louder and louder. He sees the faces of all the sheep turn toward him... "The Lord is my shepherd...the Lord is my shepherd"...Louder and louder the phrase is poured through him by an irresistible force.

He feels himself suddenly inspired, exalted, does Michel...He feels the sheep pressing in upon him...great white clouds...black noses quivering... mouths piteously wide...all bleating...



They are all waiting...in the storm, in the mad fury of the gale...They crowd forward upon the fold...the gates do not open...Michel in the darkness of the room begins bleating: he is a sheep also...He bleats, he bleats...with the strange nasal pauses of the sheep's baaing he repeats and repeats, louder and louder, "I am the lost sheep; I am the lost sheep. Until the Lord finds me, ye shall not enter; until the Lord finds me, ye shall not enter. Ba-a, b-a-a, b-a-a!"

The wife tries to still him. He strikes her with his head...with his hoofs he kicks at her...The sheep press in upon him...He must make his way among them or they will smother him...trample him... "I am the lost sheep, I am the lost sheep," cries Michel in animal-tones.

Banging at the door... "They shall not enter the gate," cries Michel, "until I enter...until the Shepherd finds me. I am the lost sheep."

The light goes on in the room...Men...neighbors enter...the wife staggers out of bed...He feels himself crushed...The flock is wedging him in...Louder and louder is Michel's cry, "I am the lost sheep"...louder, louder...

A blue-coated form finally enters...amid the bleating sheep, the storm-driven sheep...How many sheep are there? Michel wonders...More and more of them...He struggles in the crush...he fights furiously...No, they shall not crush him...but now...now he is helpless...Where, where is the Shepherd? There are too many, too many sheep...

\* \* \*

In a cell, in the madhouse Michel finds himself...He does not know where he is...how he got there...he remembers

one thing: a last moment, when, in a mirror, he saw his own face...his own face, he knows... and it was a sheep's face, and all about him, frenzied sheep were charging, rearing, crushing him...

\* \* \*

Days pass...weeks pass in the madhouse...Among all these huddled animals here...all men are animals...he recognizes, perfectly sanely, rats, wolves and swine and foxes and bears, and weasels and cat-like creatures and ape-things...He knows he is not free...where he is he cannot fancy...He ponders...Maybe he has committed some crime?...Has he?...Hours after hours, in dreams, in waking, sometimes half-dreaming, half-waking, he scours his past...he scours it...What can be the crime that he has committed?...And has he committed one?...Maybe...maybe...but this is rest...

Rest, and in his heart he is dumbly thankful...At night on his rickety cot he chants himself to sleep, "The Lord is my shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd." That phrase...no more...

He will grow well...But no one will know it...He will rest...rest...rest...

\* \* \*

Konratowski is dictating a letter at his office. His son is listening. The letter is to be sent afar to a friend. It is full of little gossip, of inconsequential items that soon fill a page; and one sentence ends a brief account of the attack that Michel made upon his wife in the middle of the night, the raging madman... It says:

"My business is prospering, since that beast, Michel, works for me no more."



# Men, Women, and Words

By BEN RAY REDMAN

Chlorinda, in the slipping gown,  
Unblushingly parades her soul  
For clinical inspection as  
Example of the Sapphic rôle;

While Doris shudders gracefully  
And droops against the man in black,  
Confessing that she marvels at  
His length of limb and breadth of back.

(Dear Doris: so ingenuous!  
Emotionally so sincere!)  
The man in black is wholly charmed,  
And lends a firm, hedonic ear.

Repression is the moment's theme:  
Gerald holds forth on Oedipus,  
And mentions dire catastrophes  
That tastes of his may bring to us

If we attempt to circumvent  
Our fateful Attic heritage—  
Wadding his argument around  
With splendid Freudian verbiage.

The slim young man against the wall,  
With pretty blushes epicene,  
Evokes the shade of Socrates,  
And lectures from the fire-screen.

Close by him sits Elizabeth,  
Her pale hands bluely rectinerved:  
Example virginal and wan  
Of bunkered fuel too long reserved.

Elizabeth bewails her fate  
With frankness not quite unafraid:  
The room is tenderly inclined,  
But no Satyros proffers aid.

And so from hand to eager hand  
The facile ball of talk is sped.  
One waits for, misses, and laments  
The absent lover of the dead.

Black was the Hellespont those nights  
When, for a priestess of Sestos,  
Leander slipped into the flood  
From the still town of Abydos.

What theories sustained his stroke  
When all the world was overcast,  
And Freud and Jung still humbly lurked  
In unexpressed spermatoblast?

Did Orestes and Pylades,  
While camping by their Grecian streams,  
Exchange, interpret and set down  
The revelations of their dreams?

Sappho, Jocasta, Oedipus—  
Your names go round the room tonight,  
Illumined by our modern blaze  
Of psychoanalytic light.

We pity you your sightless years,  
And celebrate our learned day:  
But Doris and the man in black,  
With ancient wisdom, steal away.



# Three Fires

By MARGARET BATTERHAM

FATHER stooped to the floor. "It is only a little piece of black ribbon," said Aunt Elspeth. "Don't bother with it."

The thin strip began to twist across the plank towards a crack in the floor.

Aunt Elspeth said: "Oh, Lawkie me!"

Father's hand followed the pointed tail. His fingers closed in upon it. He brought the little black snake over to me in my cot. I held out my hands for it. Aunt Elspeth gurgled a protest which slid into the pool of her throat in silence at a look from my father.

"Let it be. She knows nothing of the Mother Eve."

Father dropped the little snake into my cupped hands. It was cold. It wriggled about trying to find a warm, snugly place between my fingers. About its neck was a yellow stripe. I put out one finger to touch the stripe and feel how the head was put on to the body. My little snake stuck out its black pin of a tongue at me and I laughed until I forgot to watch it. It came out half-way between my fingers. I caught it quickly by the middle of its writhing body. It turned about my arm like a bracelet.

"Look, look! It is so pretty!" I cried out, holding the arm towards my father.

The snake slid off into my cot and wriggled among the covers, a black trail of ink on the white sheet.

Aunt Elspeth gurgled again. This time her voice ran before falling into silence. "It will do on her sheets."

Father laughed. "You know nothing," he said.

I hunted in the sheets and found my little snake lying in a crease. It put out its black pin at me again.

"He is cold, faver. I shall take him under the covers with me."

I caught the cold body again in my fingers. I snuggled under the sheet and wooly blanket, holding my hands close together against my breast. I could see the bead eyes and the dainty head sticking through my two thumbs. My knees were brought up to my stomach, my chin ducked under the cover. Aunt Elspeth did not sanction curling up in bed. I had seen her long body lying straight and still under the covers of her bed. I did not think she could curl up. I could not hear what she said. My head was under the cover and father was there. I heard him poking the fire. My hands were stiff with holding the snake. Yet it would not get warm. The cold body turned and twisted against the palms of my hands. I held it tighter and closer to me.

"Little snake, won't you get warm?" My voice sounded close and quiet under the sheet. The dim shadows of the white tent made my eyes tired as I looked at my snake. He would not get warm. I began to whimper. I felt my father's large hand on my head. He pulled back the covers.

"Faver! He will not get warm. He is so cold." I held it against my face.

"Give it me, child." He held out his hand.

"Will you put him near the fire?" I asked.

Father nodded. "Yes, child, I will put him near the fire."

"And will he get warm?"

I opened my cramped fingers above father's big hand. The little snake fell into his hand. He put it on the hearth and it wriggled across the stone towards the fire. The flames dizzied and jerked. They laughed at my little black snake as he crumpled into a hole and crawled under them straight into their red and glowing hearts.

Poor, poor little cold snake! To get warm by the fire—warm, cold little snake, the fire—

The church! The church! It is the church! Look at the flames, the evil, wicked flames, leaping out of the chancel, up, up into the sky. The fire wagon is coming. And the people! Miss Trat is crying. She will never put fresh flowers on the altar again, fill the pitcher with wine, the blood of Christ. Are the flames licking at the blood of Christ? The firemen! The hose! The water streams into the House of God. Why does not He stop the fire in His House?

Father! Father! The flames are flying through the air! Little burning pieces of God's House are falling on to ours. They are falling on the roof and burning. Will we never get the garden hose screwed on to the tap in the bathroom?

Father climbed up into the dusty garret and out on to the roof. He held the hose in his hand and darted the water back and forth on the burning pieces.

Aunt Elspeth rushed into the street.

She threw all her weight against a stolid fireman, holding the hose.

"Look, look! Our house! Turn the hose on to our house, on to the roof!"

The fireman did not stir. He was saving the House of God.

She ran back into the house and up the stairs, tumbling over a bucket of water, set ready to throw on the porch roof. The water trickled through to the ceiling of the parlor and fell on the purple-cushioned stool father bought at the Chicago Fair. I tried to mop it up with the dish cloth. Little pieces of grease rubbed into the purple covering. It smelt of soup and velvet.

I looked out of the window. The whole world was yellow, yellow outside. The big flame was burning into the sky. The fire of the House of God was trying to reach His House in the sky. And our house?

"Oh, God, don't burn down our house! If you can't stop a fire in Your Own House, don't let it burn up ours!"

Aunt Elspeth came shrieking into the parlor and dragged me out by my arm into the street. Little flames were running all about our roof. And father was standing on the roof with the garden hose.

The fireman put up a ladder against our house and brought father down.

The flames ate a hole in the roof above my room. They ran down into my room. They ran across my bed. They ran into my cupboard. They burnt my clothes. The firemen threw water into my room.

The flames were licking the blood of Christ in His House. The flames were eating up my new dress of pink that I was going to wear when I went to His House.



"Father, father! Make them stop. You make them stop." I clung to my father's hand in the street. "God can't stop the flames."

I could smell the cloth of my pink dress burning.

The horse's hoofs knocked the little rocks out of the trail and they rolled and fell down against my feet. I could feel them. The trees came down to the edge of the trail and sloughed their darkness on to us. We moved in it. We had never been in anything but darkness. I stumbled against crystallized darkness.

"Father, father! I am lost. Wait for me!"

Father stopped the horse. I fell against her flanks. She was steaming with warm darkness.

"Take hold of her tail," Father told me.

I clung to the bristling darkness of old Nell's tail. She pulled me, she lead me over rough, jagged darkness. She jerked me through an eternity of darkness. My hand clung to the bristling stuff in its grasp.

"We are near the top," father's voice said.

"How do you know?"

"See, child. Look ahead. It begins to be light through the trees."

I could not see. Old Nell stopped. I swung against the wall of warm, soft

blackness of her side. Her muscles twitched from her intense exertion.

I looked. My eyes looked. They saw. It was a little spot of light through the trees, a red fire.

Father pulled Old Nell and me along the trail. It wound above the camp fire. My eyes watched the fire with an aching relief in being able to see.

We stopped again. We looked down at the camp fire. Tree trunks stood about it. It caught and absorbed the darkness around it. A woman lay by the fire. Her long hair fell near the flames, catching the light from them. Shadow covered her body. She held out white arms to the red glow. A man came from out the darkness. He knelt over the woman's body. The shadow of his body lost itself in the shadow lying on the ground. The white arms disappeared into the shadow of the mutual body.

My father pulled at old Nell.

"Come, child," he muttered.

The bristling stuff in my hand became taut. I followed. I looked back. The fire was warm, soft, lovely. It burnt up brightly, passionately, red. Between the tree trunks, I saw the big shadow on the ground. The white arms were about the shadow. I heard a sharp little cry of pain and pleasure.

"Father! The fire!"

The bristling stuff in my hand jerked me on through the darkness.

# Hitch Your Wagon to a Star

By ALLEN TATE

The dull conclave of crows'-footed faces  
Twitches as the man with one dollar enters;  
It moves a soilured delicate hand, as if  
Displaying a marketable emotion on a string.

Hear the tomtoms, smell the warm stale beer,  
See the curve of the synthetic quick waggle,  
Let ancient visions impinge the modern retina,  
Polish the image of a burnished Phrygia.

For I have heard that somewhere, on desolate  
And traditionally inspiring shores,  
Small ladies, possessing subtile bellies, knew heroes  
Whose creed held for no paltry asyndeton;

And, somewhat later, in the cool of a fern wood,  
One heard the grimly clatter of shields  
Who threaded tapestries in the sheathing dark  
And the courtyard rang with a feutering of spears...

The emotion is marketable indeed  
Despite the crows'-feet which Strato doesn't mention:  
Showing the contemporary irrelevancy of myths  
And the understanding of a man with one dollar.

Make gracious attempts at sanctifying Jenny,  
Supply cosmetics for the ordering of her frame,  
Think of her as Leda, as a goddess,  
The while she lives in Redkey, Indiana.



# The Delta Wife

*A Play in One Act*

By WALTER McCLELLAN

*Persons:*

HAMER MATHES

CORA MATHES

*The rising of the curtain discloses a room of Hamer Mathes' cabin, on a winter night. The house stands behind the levee in a far Southern state, in the delta of the great river. The rear of the room is heaped with articles brought in for shelter against overflow: two saw-horses, a roll of chicken wire, an empty coop, a new wood door painted bright blue, wash tubs, coils of clothes-line, and in front of these a pile of patchwork coverlids and white cotton sheets. Mathes, a middle-aged man, spreads a quilt over a sort of long low table, or bed, the drapery falling to the floor on all sides. It stands immediately before the heap of articles. The room is barely lighted, and when he is through he moves quickly to a kerosene lamp on a table, and turns up the wick. He goes then to a door R., which opens onto the porch, and shuts it, pushing the bars in place that fasten it. He is thus engaged when Cora, a young woman, enters through door L., from the cabin's other room. She has her coat on her arm, a yarn "fascinator" is tied about her head, and she carries a small bundle which she starts to place on the quilt Hamer has spread out. On seeing her, Mathes, his back to the outer door, exclaims sharply,*

Not there! Don't drop it there!

CORA

*(Placing bundle on table)* What'd you see outside, Hamer?

HAMER

Nothin'.

CORA

Nothin' a-tall?

HAMER

That's a fool question. You know there ain't nothin' to see but water all 'round us. This time o' night, you can't hardly see the water.

CORA

Did you hear anything?

HAMER

Water a-suckin' at the house-piles; same as we've heard it all day, sence the little levee broke.

CORA

Seemed to me there was something else once: a moanin', far-off sound, like a boat's whistle.

HAMER

I don't know. But that wouldn't be the signal! It would be all the boats on the river tonight, all a-blowin' together. Our levee ain't goin'a break. If the levees above and below us was as strong, there wouldn't be no water 'round this shack.

CORA

How high's it climbed?

HAMER

It's most up to the floor now.

CORA

Lissen! I hear it runnin' under us.

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HAMER

Well, it's run there before, and the house stood.

CORA

But we had a boat them times! We ain't never been caught here like we are now. We might as well be on an island in the river. While ago I looked out the window—

HAMER

Out which window?

CORA

In yonder. Why? A pile of drift-wood was floatin' right past, and I seen a white horse go by all tangled in some willow boughs. Or maybe it was a dawg.

HAMER

No, you ain't! That current's not strong enough to carry no dead body yit.

CORA

God knows what'll be floatin' there by mornin'! What was you thinkin' 'bout, Hamer, not to keep a boat here by us? We ain't got a chance in these eggshell walls if the big levee goes.

HAMER

You seem mighty anxious to live, all of a sudden. Way you've moped 'bout this place, I'd a-said you didn't ke'eh whether you stayed on top of soil or not.

CORA

S'pose I do want some more of livin'—what's strange in that? I'm not old, hard as you've tried—for you have, Hamer!—to make me old 'fore my time.

HAMER

You want some more years like them we been livin' here together? Is that the size of it?

CORA

No, no, I don't! I don't want *none* of this sorta livin' any longer.

HAMER

(Grabbing her by the arm so that she has to face him) Why don't you? Why don't you? You been standin' it. You're my woman, r'member—jest as much my wife you are, after all this time, as if you was married to me.

CORA

I ain't, neither. I growed up with you hangin' 'round Paw's shanty-boat, and 'fore I was good growed up you know what you done—

HAMER

I s'pose it was all me, huh? You never had nothin' to do with it!

CORA

I ain't said that. But who'd ever told me what to do and what not to do? Nobody. Paw and you would fish and drink corn and smoke, settin' in the sunshine, talkin' dirty talk 'bout women—

HAMER

What's the use diggin' all that up now?

CORA

—And you all was pretty near the onliest folks I seen. When you fust come after me, I—I— Oh, I thought that was what bein' growed up meant, what you wanted me and you to do. Did you s'pose I loved you?

HAMER

You never acted like you hated me.

CORA

Sure, I never hated you. I never thought much 'bout you, 'cept at fust, maybe. Soon you was jest a part of things.

HAMER

Well, for two years now, till the last month, you been quiet and peaceable enough, Cora. Now you got some sorta queer notion in your head—I know what



I'm talkin' 'bout!—and the sooner you get it out, the better. That's straight. You're my woman, Cora.

CORA

S'pose I was to tell you—not after tonight, not much longer I'm goin' to be—what'd you say, Hamer?

HAMER

I'd say you plumb lost your senses.

CORA

But it's true. I come in here to tell you 'bout it. I've found a way out.

HAMER

Out of what?

CORA

Out of livin' with you.

HAMER

I'm damned if you have! (*Seizes her hands and pulls her to him.*)

CORA

Wait, wait! I'll tell you all about it—I'll tell you everything. Let go, Hamer! You ain't got no call to twist my arms thataway.

HAMER

(*He does not loosen his hold, and speaks close to her face.*) So that's why you're not hankerin' jest to be livin' on here! It's something else you're after. Did you reckon I wa'n't noticin' your carryings on? Why, I even seen them faraway looks in your eyes, and them smiles that didn't fade off till you came face to face with me. Oh, I seen everything.

CORA

If you mean—mean Chris Heath loves me and I love him, it's true. I would a-told you a month ago, but I was scared—I'm always scared of you!

HAMER

Do you stand there and say you're this fellow's fancy woman?

CORA

No, I'm not. I'm not! Don't call me bad names, Hamer. I do love him, but it's not thataway. That would a-spoiled ever'-thing for me.

HAMER

And for him, too. I reckon you'll say next. Was I born yesterday? Here's a good-lookin' young woman what belongs to one fellow, and she lets another 'un know she's sweet on *him*—a rovin' chap, a timber cutter, here today, gone tomorrow—and all he asks is to hold her hand! What do you think men are goin' up and down the world for, eyeing this woman and that?

CORA

How many men could I find willin' to wait till I say the word? But *he's* waited.

HAMER

Was he a fool then? Or do you take me for one? You savin' yourself up thataway—it ain't natural. I know human nature, and I know you, too.

CORA

It's not true, what you think. You wanta make ever'thing fit into your notion of what's what. But it don't, it don't...I love him— Oh, I love him like I was a girl that no fellow's ever so much as laid his hand on. Does that sound crazy to you? There's a lot more I'm feelin' than I can tell you, or you or anybody else would ever understand. I know there's folks a-plenty would say I'm a bad woman to have lived with you. But I ain't. You can't judge people jest by what they do. Things begun between you and me as natural most as breathin', as takin' a drink of water; and I got used to you in no time a-tall. When Paw died, I stuck to you. I always been afraid of people and things

—afraid to strike out—I always feel like a high wind's blowin', and I'm tryin' to git home... There wa'n't nowhere to go but with you. But you ain't never meant nothin' to me. I know that now. None of this life seems real to me. Only Chris is real, and goin' away with him.

HAMER

And you wanted to git married to this man, I s'pose—license paper, gold ring, and all?

CORA

I wanta git outa here and start over again; and I want ever'thing to be diffrunt between me and him from what it's been between you and me.

HAMER

Like Hell you do! Did you know Heath 'fore he come here from the saw-mill to board with us?

CORA

No, I didn't. I'd never spoke a word to him till you brought him to the house. But it's done now, and I'm jest askin' you to let ever'thing in the past be like it hadn't been a-tall. It can be, most, if you'll look at it thataway. I want to do what's fair—that's why I'm tellin' you 'bout me and Chris. And it's hard to do 'cause I always been 'fraid of you, 'fraid like a dog's 'fraid. That's what you done to me, got me where I won't call my soul my own soon. It's got so that when you come where I am, I'm a diff'runt person. Soon as you walk in the door. What sorta life is that? I'd ruther be dead and done with it all!

HAMER

Oh, you ain't got the nerve to die. You hadn't got the nerve to run off with Heath 'thout tellin' me about it! Now with all this big talk, what makes you

think you're goin' to git away from here tonight?

CORA

'Cause Chris is comin' for me. In a boat.

HAMER

That's why you're tellin' me all this now—beforehand, huh? Sayin' what you wanted to do, like you was boss here. Well, where did I come in? Was I to be left holdin' the bag? I ain't never yit stood for bein' cheated.

CORA

You ain't bein' cheated now.

HAMER

I am. Outa you. You belong to me.

CORA

I don't. I never promised to stick by you. Why shouldn't I go free? (*A wave strikes the outer door. It sounds like a muffled knock. Cora starts.*)

HAMER

That's only a wave hittin' the door. Wants to git in. Many a man's wanderin' out there tonight, in a skiff or dugout, floatin' above land that'll be thick in cotton next fall, when he won't be nowhere. It's only the river, I say!

CORA

But Chris is comin' for me. I know he'll come.

HAMER

Well, you won't be here; and I won't be here.

CORA

Why won't we?

HAMER

'Cause we'll be gone.

CORA

What you mean, Hamer?

HAMER

I mean I've found a boat, and we're goin' to clear out—right now. You get that? I've found a boat to take us



away. No, I ain't been drinkin'; not a drop. You jest lissen to me. 'Fore you come in here, I stepped out on the porch to see what the rain was doin'. When it got so I could tell what was what in the dark, I seen a boat, a skiff, right by our front step.

CORA

Where'd it come from?

HAMER

It was a good boat—had two seats.

CORA

Where'd it come from? Was it driftin'?

HAMER

No, it wa'n't. It was still, all right. The oars was layin' on our porch, and the skiff was tied with a rope to the post.

CORA

Hamer Mathes, who brung that boat here?

HAMER

A man, o' course. What you reckon?

CORA

That was Chris! I know it was him! *(She pauses, looking from Mathes to the outer door).* Oh, I don't b'lieve none of this happened. I don't b'lieve there's any boat out there. I asked you what'd you see when you come from out there, and you said 'Nothin'.'

HAMER

I got no time now to talk jest to be talkin'. Go see for yourself.

CORA

*(She rushes to the door R., unbars it, and steps without. In a moment she reappears, and leans against the door-post, as if exhausted).* It's there. It's there. *(She shuts the door, but does not bar it; then advances toward Mathes.)* What's happened? Where's

Chris? O Good Lord! Where's Chris?

HAMER

*(He does not look at her).* A man has a right to look after his women-folks! That's the law. No jury will swing a man for that. I seen too many cases; they all come clear. What did the fellow expect, comin' after you? I seen how things was goin' between you and him, and I made him quit stayin' here a week ago. That's why he left when he did. And now he comes sneakin' back. What'd he expect?

CORA

Don't say it! Don't say it, Hamer!

HAMER

Don't say what?

CORA

You know...! That you done anything... Yes, yes, go on—tell me what's happened. I can't stand this waitin'.

HAMER

*(Violently.)* I done it, Cora! I done what you're thinkin' about. *(She screams.)* There ain't no use to make such a fuss. What you take me for, anyhow? I done for him same as I'd kill any low water snake creepin' in here.

CORA

You didn't—you didn't! How could you without me hearin' no noise?

HAMER

For God's sake...! Do you think I'm lyin'?

CORA

Where was it, then—you done it?

HAMER

Right in this room. You was in yonder. I was in here. I heard his boat hit the porch, and I 'spicioned it was him. I knowed the door wa'n't barred, and I didn't go bar it. Why should I? If this here wa'n't to be now, it was to

be sometime. I'd told him what I'd do if he come here again. And still he come... I stood behind the door there, and waited. He knocked once, real light, then once more. Then he pushed on it easy-like, and when he seen it wa'n't fastened, he opened it soft and come sidlin' in. Thought maybe I wa'n't here. But I was, oh, I was! And—I done it. That's when I done it. With my knife. Drove it in deep, through the fellow's shoulder blades. Yeah, it was from behind—what about that? He was bigger 'n younger 'n stronger 'n me. Jest 'fore I struck him, all in a flash I seen how he'd carry you off, and have you for his'n, and leave me here like a rat to drown. I seen all that; I seen it all.

*(The door, which Cora had failed to bar, blows open before the wind, and a stream of overflow water runs into the room. They both start, then stand as if stupefied. Hamer exclaims, irritably)*

HAMER

Why didn't you bar the door while you was about it?

CORA

*(She shuts and bars it, then moves mechanically to the pile of bedding in the rear of the room, and fumbles among the rags and quilts for a cloth with which to wipe up the water. Choosing a piece of white sheet, she stoops and sops up the pools. She advances always toward the pile of heaped up articles, away from the door where she has started. Hamer watches her intently. Suddenly she halts, and holding up the rag in her two hands, speaks from the floor where she is crouched on her knees.)* What am I doin' this for? Where is he? Where's Chris? What

you done with him? *(Hamer looks down, and does not answer. Cora gazes wildly from him about the room, here, there, into corners, then drops her gaze to her hands, to the rag she holds. It is splotted in bright red streaks. Then she glances at the pools about her, dabs furiously at them, sees the rag become almost solid crimson, and begins to crawl, always on her knees, through the water and blood until she is before the pile. She feels beneath the low table or bed which Hamer had draped with a quilt, then draws her hand out, looks at it, waves it in the air. It is red, too. She seizes the covering and throws it off, disclosing the body of Chris Heath. It lies on an old bed tick, the head on the floor, lower than the body.)* Chris, Chris! It ain't you, Chris? Oh, God, it is him. *(Bending over Heath, she weeps.)*

HAMER

Didn't he have to be somewhere? I told you he was dead. You come in here 'fore I was through, or you wouldn't never seen him, or known nothin' about it.

CORA

Why wouldn't I?

HAMER

'Cause he'd a-been where he's going to be 'fore we leave here.

CORA

How can you stand there—how could you talk to me all this time like nothin' had happened, and you knowin' in your heart what you done?

HAMER

I done what any man would a-done. *(He does not look at her, but sits with his back to her and the body of Heath.)* *(Cora feels in the junk pile, and picks*



*up a cant hook. Holding this beside her, she moves cautiously towards the man. On her face is a wild expression, as though she would burst suddenly into laughter or into tears. She is possessed with a half-crazed determination to injure Mathes. She raises the tool above his back, and as she does so utters, uncontrollably, a small scream, hardly more than a sharp breath. Then as the man springs to his feet, facing her, she drops her weapon, and sobs hysterically.)*

HAMER

If you wa'n't such a fool—how dast you try any rough stuff like that on me? You wouldn't a-done nothin', though—you ain't got the guts. You ain't *nothin'*.

CORA

I am, I am! I ain't dirt under your feet. I could tell you something would set your mouth crookin' another way, I could.

HAMER

What could you tell, or do, or be, or think, or say? Good Lord, here you done had a month with this fellow, and I swear I b'lieve—I b'lieve you two ain't done nothing a-tall but set and look at each other. That's all you two done.

CORA

You're wrong—you're wrong there. Now I'll tell you something. You called me a bad name. Long ago it seems. It was true, what you said. O' course it was true, true, true, *true*. I lied to you so as to break it easy to you—I wanted you to let me git away. Yeah, I was his fancy woman, if you want to call it that! I got that on you and the world—they ain't nothin' can take it away from me. You can't take it away from me.

HAMER

You——! I can beat it out of your hide, though! I've made you say it, I've made you come through. If you knew what was good for you, you'd a-kept a-lying. I could strangle you right now.

CORA

I don't ke'eh if you do.

HAMER

I won't though. Why do you think I killed him? 'Cause I didn't want him to have you. Now he's dead, stone dead, and he can't git you away from me.

CORA

You reckon I'm still goin' on livin' with you?

HAMER

Sure, I do.

CORA

I won't! I'll run away. I'll go by myself, I tell you. I'll run to the end of the earth.

HAMER

Big talk won't git you nowheres. You ain't goin'a run.

CORA

And if we git to town, I'm goin' straight and tell the sheriff on you.

HAMER

You *are* not! Not a dam' word. Ain't nobody but you and me goin'a know what's happened in this house... Now we got to be goin'. We can't lose no more time. I don't like the sound of them waves, and a big wind's blowin' outside.

CORA

Are you the same sorta folks as me and him—what sorta feelin's have you got?

HAMER

Same as you or him or anybody! I never started this business. If this fellow'd never come here, we wouldn't a-been caught in a trap like this.

CORA

Oh, I'm caught! I'm caught like a wild critter what can't move. Does ever'body in the world git caught that-away? Seems like God's a hunter—he's an old hunter, bent over, creepin' through the cane, settin' traps to catch us and tear us and hold us fast. That's what He is!

HAMER

I reckon it's us that sets 'em. It's us that stumbles on 'em. And it's up to us to git out of 'em.

CORA

There ought to be some way to git out... Oh, I don't know nothin'— I don't know nothin' a-tall. But it ain't fair, it ain't fair.

HAMER

The way out for us is to leave here in his boat, and forgit all we done and seen tonight. The boat's outside, and our best chance is to git to high ground 'fore the levee goes, if it does go. Put on your hat and coat. *(She obeys. He goes to door R., and opens it.)* Now I got one thing to do 'fore we leave. If the levee goes, he'll go too, but if the levee holds, the house'll stand, and here his body'll be. I ain't takin' no chances. It's the river road for him. *(He stoops over Heath's body.)* Full of himself he was when he come, thinkin' of the big lumber camps, and the big towns, and the lights, and pay-days, and what him and you would do in the world. And now he's out of the world, all of him that matters, forever and a day.

CORA

*(To herself)* He's out of the world. Out of the world.

HAMER

*(Hamer puts his hands under Heath's armpits and drags the body slowly across the floor. The quilt falls from*

*Heath, and lies in their wake. Cora does not move, but stands with her eyes fastened on Hamer and his burden until they pass through the door. When they disappear, it becomes an open black space filled with the roar of wind and water. A boat whistle sounds. Another, and another, and many others, lonely, clamorous, a chorus of desolation. The big levee has broken, spreading destruction far and wide through the Delta country. Then Cora moves; suddenly, swiftly. She runs to the door, slams it, pushes the heavy hickory bars in place, and throws her weight against them.)*

CORA

I'll show you! I'll show you I can do something. I ain't no dirt under your feet.

*(Hamer is heard beating on the boards, and, indistinctly, calling "Cora! Cora!")*

CORA

No, no! Go on! You can't git me now. Not this way, you can't. Never any more. *(He does not call again. She turns, stoops and gathers up the quilt that had fallen from Heath, fingering its edges.)* Yeah, a high wind's a-blowin'—it's always been a-blowin'. But this time it's shakin' all the trees and the rivers in the world, and the houses are shakin'. *(She drops the quilt, spreads out her arms, her back still to the door.)* I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid! *(Her head moves from side to side, and a slight smile plays about her mouth—almost a sweet smile. In the clamor of noise her voice is lost altogether, and though her lips continue to move, not so much as a faint cry is heard in the heavy tumult of the night.)*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.



# Paris

By HAZEL COLLISTER HUTCHISON

Like a great cathedral  
Knee deep in its little town  
This fine old city gathers France about her.  
Grotesque chimney pots look down  
Like gargoyles, stone desires  
Fling themselves upward in the shape of spires,  
And life has washed to the very doors  
Its fringe of filth.  
Ever the restless throngs,  
Swollen with curious strangers, move  
Through mysterious cloister and shadowed nave,  
Stopping a moment before the groove  
Of an ancient shrine where prayers are told  
To a sad, sweet lady in blue and gold.  
Glories of empire, pride of kings,  
The way impetuous, red blood flows,  
Courage and vision and lust and greed—  
How much she knows.  
Yet there is peace in her patient eyes;  
For in lonely chapels tapers yearn  
Quietly upward in points of flame  
Turning to beauty as they burn.

## Fellow Creature

By RICHARD KIRK

I saw the wind take roadside dust and make  
What seemed a living thing. In that  
Gray whorl of earth did pride-in-life awake,  
Ere wind and dust fell flat?

# Futility

By IVAN T. DOWELL

one evening in spring a young man came out of his house and sat down in the dusk he thought he would sit there while he smoked a cigarette the apple orchard across the road was in full bloom and the old trees seemed to reel drunkenly the slender maples in the front yard had opened bright green leaves and the woodbine had siezed afresh the clapboarding of the house which was neither very old nor very new the road which passed the house ran on to the town which was not far beyond the town lay the rest of the world mystery and adventure and experience green hope and blue joy life and love and death prodigious portents the young man sat upon the steps before his house and smoked his cigarette crickets shrilled from the grass stars came out dusk deepened ducks quacked behind the barn the girl lay upon her back across a divan her apartment 92nd street its nothing to boast of she said to the tired man above her who was spilling the dish water of old emotions in her face its nothing to boast of but I am a virgin the ducks quacked as they drove their bills in the mud the girls fingers touched the floor behind the divan and her dinner gown became a girdle heavy browed scientists hastened to bolster up the law of gravitation they adduced a code of by laws and declared for more rigorous enforcement it was raining and the girl gave the tired man five pennies he ran two blocks to the subway but he got pretty wet though the weather was warm the village slept in its drawers why the hell dont that boy come back with that bread ill bet ill hide him damn if ill eat these old cold pan cakes from morning i want my supper and i want that bread dont eat all them potatoes up either take some of them up to your mother you know she cant go up and down them stairs the way she has got herself now been powdering your face again have you well you better grow up with another one coming the blossoms became green apples the apples ripened and fell to the ground in the quiet of the night each apple made quite a loud thud the ivy turned from green to scarlet on the housetop many kings died and others ran away old uncle ben topped the maples because he said if ever a strong wind came they would fall over and crush the house uncle ben died and rotted to bones a boy who wanted to be a poet sat in a mean garret and read a letter from his mother i hope you are well she said send me your socks to darn I am as well as usual my back bothers considerable i am sending you a chicken i hope it reaches you all right the would be poet ate the chicken and sucked the marrow though he lived for several days they never



found his other shoe he had hurled it out the window at a cat the crickets shrieked endlessly and the stars pursued each other across the skies the young mans mother appeared in the doorway and told him he had better come to bed as it was growing late a cock crowed china was disturbed the wind was in the southwest a boy of five years hid behind a telegraph pole americas most famous novelist smiled at his walking stick went with it for a walk i want to tell the truth about something his companion loudly fingered a phi beta kappa key about what yamma yamma yamma yamma ah but yamma yamma yamma yamma forgot a phi beta kappa key remembered a phi beta kappa key forgot remembered the child shuddered peered from behind pole as steel driver crashed upon piling sunk it this later became a public library the boy asked for book grey haired lady at desk sent him home to wash his hands on the way there he met two boys and a dog the boys were brothers and they went behind a billboard and astonished themselves the dog was just a friend boom of the sunset gun at fort rosecrans attila gave his attention to rome radiophone snickered on the pennsylvania roof i want to get a copy of yammer yammer yes sir you mean yamma yamma yes of course yammer yammer two dollars and a half are you from new orleans no london hasnt this title been used before no that was yammer yammer by the tartar yam the mayor of bold knob arkansas had never heard of henry james he was in bed asleep the tide at port san luis was 00.1 there were features pans and trees around a campfire a mouth spoke thats up to you i know what i think women are good enough for me a star fell a tree fell a man fell to nadir a star raced to zenith collided with a word consumed the mayor of bald knob turned over but observers on mount lowe were oblivious crickets shrieked from bushes tufts of grass behind fences shrieked night throbbled uprose and advanced apaches the young mans mother came out on the porch spoke to him went beyond the barn through the duck pen crawled into a blackberry thicket wept some dust whirled greyly on the road to town paris the name of a french city london a hollow concept cezannes women have no sex appeal true but what a master of tonalities what color magnificent schemes but the fellow was moodless of what could he have been thinking of cezanne come billy come billy i did cant you see im all out of wind i chased him all over hell but i went up to my knees in that damned swamp and he got away ill beat his head off yet why ive got to take fannie over to her fathers shes my wife but she cant stay in my house what do you think that damned sneaking bohunk i saw how she was getting i hadnt touched her since christmas think of that she wouldnt let me i fetched her father and between the two of us we got it out of her that god damned bohunk she cant stay in my house and have his kids she says she couldnt help it now what the hell do you

think of a woman like that says she was milking the cow she cant stay here and have his damn kids with blue eyes and maybe sometime i would think i was feeding my own and it would be his damn baby with blue eyes.

## Madman

By MARIAN NEVIN FUNK

He said he was afraid  
To sleep in a room  
Where mirrors held  
The empty moon.

The wind he said  
Came up his stair  
With three stars tangled  
In her hair;

That monstrous  
Caravans went by  
In the black desert  
Of his sky.

But she that yearlong  
There had lain:  
*Coignes of shadow*  
*In his brain.*



# The Lady Bellamira

By HANIEL LONG

**J**UST before her sixteenth birthday, the lady Bellamira grew aware of a young man, named Euphorion, who like her, had inherited an estate, and whose garden adjoined hers.

A number of moons passed by, and Euphorion remained oblivious of her. Pained, the lady made discreet inquiries. Her old nurse discovered and reported that his only direct contact with reality was at dinner; in his favor, she added that the comparatively small portion of the world he dined upon daily appeared to give him pleasure. For the rest, he avoided direct impressions, and preferred the shadow-life which one lives who drugs himself continually with the printed page. All colors, all shapes, had to come to him through black type and white paper.

"You must let him alone, Bellamira," said the nurse. "He has not plagued you."

"It plagues me that he should not regard me," answered the young lady.

Bellamira was no addict to black letter. She received her impressions direct from life, and it was by the eye she grasped the universal promenade.

A vast deserted garden was not far away, and in it the mirrors of a pool. Here, somewhat formally attired, Bellamira walked in the cool of the afternoon, resting her eye on all things God had created. At times she wore a gown of yellow satin, its brocaded border woven with deep purple and natural linen in graceful animal motives. At other

times she wore a white damask of fine quality, brodered with swan-like birds, each bearing a chain about its neck and a spray in its beak. Or, the rose-spray would appear with eagles in a fabric exquisitely drawn.

Life in the form of trees had crowned the banks of the pool with cypress and cedar, and a few long branches had trailed down over its face; and below the jutting sod dropped a tangle of roots. On the shore, life was proud in a half-grown willow, the highest branches of which mixed with the ancient cedar. The wild grape came down from the cypress, and climbed up into it again, intermingling with another vine which bore red berries. Still another bore yellow berries, and a fourth embraced the shaded roots, and faded into fern. Life itself was in these vines, eager to be wreathed about the brows of heroes and of lovers. But nowhere was life quite so engaging as in the person of the Lady Bellamira.

Hearing that sometimes Euphorion likewise walked here and alone, book in hand, the lady designed to meet him. She chose the white gown with the swans. When he came, she attracted his eye by observing him through a bouquet of silver blossoms. He seemed no more than seventeen, and she was relieved to see that the vice of reading had not impaired his sight, for he was as yet without optical assistance.

"What are you doing?" he inquired.

"I like to gaze at things through

things. You don't care, do you, if I look at you? I peer through silver willows at the blue sky, and then I try the cedar instead. Have you ever tried the cedar? Or I gaze at blue water through a wall of cypress, or at white clouds through the wild grape. Nay, at myself too do I gaze, in mirrors of green water; and if a boy cared to love me, I should gaze at him through vine and shadow, or mix him with white thunder-clouds through grasses."

"That is most interesting," he replied thoughtfully, and wondering that there should be so much to see outside of libraries. He, too, picked a cluster of flowers, rather awkwardly, and observed Bellamira through it; liking the pastime, he gazed at her through the tracery of ferns. But, unaccustomed as he was to direct impressions, the mingling of such beauties disturbed him; and, as prisoners released after years of detention are known to regret their cells, so he at once longed for the more distant view of woman one obtains from missals and illuminated volumes.

Joy and sorrow, and eternity itself, he reflected, assume different meanings when one has no longer a dictionary with one.

The Lady Bellamira was convinced he had not as yet really seen her. Except when he examined her gown—the remote and symbolic devices apparently awakened his interest—his eye had something like a glaze over it; he glanced rather than really looked, or he looked as one might at anything or anybody. So, when he bade her take tea with him and see the world through the glass of literature, she thought it her duty to herself and her sex to accept

the invitation, and show him how poor a world was that of the scribes and Pharisees.

She tarried a moment to snatch a little green and black snake from the root-tangle of a tree. The pretty worm she secreted in an invisible pocket; and as they walked along the path she was likewise fortunate enough to find an apple-tree, and to secure the emblematic apple.

What has been said of Euphorion would hardly be worth saying if his were the oddities of an ordinary person. One meets scholars and men of affairs whose optic nerves never quiver except at alphabets or numerals, and who have never really seen anything in their lives but ink-darkened paper; but this youth had a species of wit, and he had also a visual imagination. After once reading, let us say, the account of Adam and Eve in the garden, though he had never seen an Eve or an Eden, he could furnish one details of that comedy which, for poetry, Adam himself could not equal. Of course the young man's version of the affair would be purely decorative; a dim enough fresco compared to what one might paint who had suffered the reality of an apple, a snake, a god, and a woman, all in conjunction. But it showed an imagination needing little to cover its walls with interest; an imagination which reality, in judicious draughts, would set aflame with power.

In the late afternoon sunlight they passed through a mile of trees and shrubbery, and then stepped from a garden into a library.

"Dear child,—I mean, dear Lady,—you have made me feel the charm of

landscape," he said, "and I hope to make you feel the charm of reality refined in a romantic volume."

"O, please do, for if there is aught lovelier than landscape, I desire to know of it. And please see that candied ginger comes with the tea."

She seated herself, spreading out her embroidered swans, and glanced at the book-shelves. "That is what they do with us when we die," she thought, with a shiver. She saw a gilded set of *The Lives of Celebrated Lovers*, and thought to herself how ironical it was to call such dead things "lives". To her the entire chamber was like a Pantheon, full of urns of the late impassioned.

The tale he selected dealt by chance with a lady who lacked in her garden a certain blue flower which she craved, and with a gentleman who lacked in his a certain white flower. But the lady's garden and the gentleman's adjoined, and after some discussion they agreed to share their hereditary borders. Then, glorying in what had heretofore been denied her, the heroine plucked blue blossoms and placed them in vases, pattern and color yielding her ever more delight as she interwove them with her days; whilst he, sharing with her the petals of white flowers, learned to cherish a new loveliness, and to confuse it with sunlight and white cloud. But after a certain period, Death, which betrays all men, came into that garden; and beyond its pathways of bloom palpitated the terrible planet of war. Then her lover replaced her lilies with blood-red roses; and although she besought him to linger where her quiet pools imaged the pinnacles of cypress, he dropped a vizard between his face and

hers, and a breastplate ornamented with a crimson lion between his heart and hers, and touching her with a glove of steel, galloped away forever.

The writing had perfume, and was the work of an accomplished Euphuist.

"How charming!" cried Bellamira, clapping her hands. Was literature after all a substitute for reality? She wondered. Through the joys and sorrows of the lovers moving behind the alphabets of that story, she descried as through fairy trees the fate awaiting the race. Might literature not be a reality in itself, a plant of mysteries, a reality nourished by all other realities, from which one drew direct though disordered impressions? Impressions so bewildering: what wonder that boys born with the taste of this fruit on their lips should go astray?

But she went on, pensively, and petting the rose-sprays in her gown, "Yet why must we read of flowers when we might step into the garden and walk among them?"

"I'm sorry," he answered, "but there are things one prefers to read about."

"Are you not too fearful?"

"One learns to know oneself. The pleasures of literature come to one in the clear air of amenity. Is it so with the pleasures of gardens? 'Amid the very flowers bubbles up something bitter,' saith the poet."

She closed her ears and her eyes, and fell back on her sensations, on the rise and fall of breath, the rise and fall of blood, the rise and fall of something in her rich heart, too; and despite literature and pantheons and jars of withered roses, she knew that it was sweeter



to be alive than to be anything else. If she might only save this misguided boy!

She hesitated no longer. She took out her apple, and bit into it, and then offered it to the young man.

"Is that the apple?" he inquired trembling.

"Yes, and this is the serpent. Isn't he adorable?" She laughed with glee, and the little snake coiled about her wrist; but her companion paled.

"Do you not find him too real?" A half-impersonal curiosity led Euphorion nearer. "He has a fascination," he admitted, "but he seems so undeniably a snake."

"He is the symbol of undying life," she warned him seriously, restoring the creature to its nest in the filmy wilderness of her gown.

"I'm sorry." Euphorion saw that he had offended her. "I'm truly sorry."

The succulence of the apple still lingered on his palate. "Inscribed words have no such flavor as this fruit," he confessed. "And not the most ophidian sentence could coil about one's heart so disturbingly as that coloured snake about your wrist. My Lady, you make me half-desire to approach reality after all."

Bellamira picked up her snow-white sunshade, and with a blush of happiness gathered her diaphanous swans and rose-sprays about her.

"I hope you will ponder what I have said. You are too young to own so many books."

There were tears in her eyes as she gazed at him and gave him her hand. He held it close and appeared flushed and uneasy. Bellamira was satisfied that he was now beginning to see her.

"If you would approach reality, do so little by little," she murmured. "Rely on no text-book or index. Remember, too, that woman is reality at its maximum."

She succeeded in disengaging her hand, and stepped through the French window to the grassy terrace.

"A beautiful child," thought Euphorion, "a beautiful and a dangerous."

It was a month later. Bellamira, fresh and flower-like, and rather wistful, stood day-dreaming on her balcony in a child's tunic of iris-blue. The latticed doors to her bedchamber, open behind her, revealed couches and chairs littered with gowns and under-garments, all of them translating into thread of delicate beauty, peony blooms, lotus motives, and devices of green and pink nelumbium blossoms. In the midst of the confusion, and as though forced to sanction it, stood four traveling portmanteaus with bulging stomachs and a weary air. Bellamira was going away for the week-end.

A lad of ten or twelve years came across the lawn below her, and her eye caught him as he passed the fountain of rose-quartz. He wore the livery of Euphorion, and carried in his hand a small package. Bellamira's heart fluttered like a bird promised release from its cage.

She had waited and waited and hoped and hoped, but Euphorion had never come. From time to time they had met by accident along the countryside, and had touched hands and spoken together, he observing her with passionate, dreamy eyes; but the ardor of speech

she had wakened in him the day of the apple and the snake, had not flamed again. Suffering acutely from impressions of him that fatal day, she had resorted to many gaieties to forget him, but in vain.

The old nurse fetched her the package, and Bellamira felt her eyes go dark at sight of her name in his script. Within the package, folded and refolded, lay a manuscript volume, bound in green leather, with BELLAMIRA in golden letters on the cover and underneath the title a golden bird.

"Would he dare embalm me?" she murmured, strange and excited.

She opened the volume and found that it began with an epistle. "To Flower-Nurtured Bellamira, the Friend of life and of love: I have seen you, my lady, and seen you not with my eye alone, but with my whole being; and contrary to your maxim, my experience of you has taught me that woman is not reality, but rather irreality, at its maximum. I observed you closely that first hour; afterwards your phantom was with me night and day through an eternity, and I found you transforming yourself ever into equivalents both enchanted and enchanting. Every morning you grew, or you diminished. Your outline shifted. Without warning you would contract and become invisible; you were then a spirit, and I held you in my heart, a spirit lovely and touching greater loveliness. Anon, you spread out again into a girl with colored clothes; anon, you shriveled to dust and ashes, and even became wormwood in my mouth. And sometimes you expanded into the similitude of Mother Earth herself, amazing me with a million beauties, so that I was

able to exclude nothing from you. Then, everything curved with your limbs; everything was part of you."

At such expressions, Bellamira wept. But with more hope, she continued reading this testament of passion; the words were those of a lover, and if he loved her, should Euphorion not be coming soon?

"These sonnets celebrate the theme that we are made of the dust of the earth," so it was written, "and I could think of no sentiment more apt to please you. For earth to you, as literature to me, is a sepulchre of the most sacred persons and animals. It is my intention to delineate you as the lovely dust you are; instead of following the fashion of vain and foolish lovers who picture their ladies, not as their ladies are, but as they, in conceit, would have them be, calling them ethereal as angels, pure as the saints, faithful as the Polestar, and rejoicing always in tyrannical possession and bemoaning the approach of rivals. My concern has been different. Since dust has aspired in you to a unique beauty, I devote six sonnets to singing of you as a person unlike other persons. I mention the way you dress your hair; it is the perfection of art. I mention the gold bird in your hair; no one else wears a gold bird, and no one else deserves to. I mention your symbolic gowns. Most of all, I speak of your heroism in living, of that distrust of myopia which is your contribution to the history of love; and of your charity, too, of your patience in instructing the blind, of your patience in instructing me.

"But I could not rest there, because I found it impossible to think of you as

of what is significant only in itself, like a syrop or a sherbet. You had honored me by confusing me with green leaves and white clouds; it therefore remained only to sing in the remaining six sonnets of the universal shapes through which I in turn descry you. I believe that you are now sixteen; my lady, you will soon be seventeen. It is melancholy that we must one and all age and die, and yet eternity blossoms in our limbs; and in you I were dumb indeed not to see eternal youth, eternal desire. I ache to touch you; I ache no less to touch eternity in you. But one may touch the eternal only with thoughts.

"I hope that when you have heard my songs, you will say, happy in feeling that you have brought it about, 'This boy has consulted a celestial oculist,' and I remain, my gracious lady, in this

medicated air which I love more than life, your devoted servant."

Bellamira turned the remaining pages, and found nothing but the twelve sonnets. He had given her the blue flower of his garden without her asking for it; and the white flower of hers he had rejected. She closed the volume and gazed straight ahead of her; it slipped from her unheeding fingers, slid to her little knees, and dropped to the floor. She was conscious of the full extent of her failure: he had built her a tomb for her loveliness, a tomb in which even now while she breathed she was lying in state, cold and dead.

She rose, and with blinded eyes sought the great couch by the east window. There she flung herself down, sobbing and moaning over and over, "To think, to think, that he could make a book of *me!*"

## Gayoso Girls Are Golden

By WALTER McCLELLAN

Gayoso girls are golden,  
And gleam forever where  
In his still mind he sees them  
Bright-limbed and bare.  
Marble is naught, nor brass,  
To living flesh that glows,  
But though all flesh shall wither  
Still Beauty blows  
Over the pool of the mind  
To man on his balconnade,  
And Beauty ascends the stairs  
And cannot fade.



## Comment

PIERRE LOVING writes from New York:

On the opening of the present salon at the Anderson Galleries in New York a Frenchman, who had come here expressly to study what we are accomplishing in art, was observed quitting the rooms in frank disgust after one brief glance around. These young Americans, it seems, who had been hung without the intervention of a jury, held out nothing arresting to a European, bred amid ripe old traditions and conspicuous and time-tried achievement. Whatever Americans themselves may think of the relative value of the present exhibition, there can be no doubt that the visiting Frenchman was a bit summary and quite ill-advised.

The present showing of the American Salon marks the upshot of an old wrangle among the Independents over the thorny question of impersonal alphabetical hanging. In point of fact, however, it cuts across the scene as a highly welcome complement to the annual Independent show, which justified its existence long ago. Experimentation, freedom from traditional fetters, from formal restraint, and the unearthing of hitherto unknown talent commend themselves as the best reasons for such an exhibition as the Autumn Salon. At the outset these secessionists planned to invite about a thousand artists, but, taking thought, they wisely pared down the number to two hundred and sixty-nine, chiefly in the interest of adequate hanging and lighting. The outcome has been that the hanging, which was placed in the hands of the gallery, is attractive and soothing to the eye; there is a sense of spaciousness, harmony and ease, with no hint of Procrustean strain or overcrowding; the values of lighting and architectural form are followed with pleasing effect. Each canvas, at any rate, is skilfully framed in proper juxtaposition against the burnt-brown background of the gallery walls.

The pictures in their totality reflect an air of confident effort. In exhibitions such as the present, open to everybody and anybody who pays the initial fee, one expects to meet with the brazenly inept or the flamboyantly immature. These are not worth dwelling on and so may be dismissed at once. The pieces of sculpture by Gaston Lachaise, Robert Laurent, Warren Wheelock, Alfeo Faggi and Minna Harkavy offer no startling departure from their other work, but they are satisfying and, what is more, give poise and makeweight to the environing bodiless color. Lachaise's "Reclining Woman" we seem to have encountered elsewhere. Zorach's wood-carving is replete with a supple laugh-

ing gaiety, and an ecstatic love of life which is compacted into every robust curve and protrusive mass.

Max Weber's "Visitors," Henry Fitch Taylor's "Jazz" and Joseph Stella's "American Landscape" comprise three of the most interesting exhibits. Stella's canvas was, I gather, painted before his "Brooklyn Bridge" and "Coney Island". He voices again in color the cacophonous metallic clangor of the city's eternally pulsating heart. Stella stands almost alone in this country today for the thing he attempts to do; he manages to put on canvas not only the tremulous vibration of the city at night, but also the blinding quiver of its unceasing plain-chant. "Jazz" by Taylor is not too abstract or too symphonic for the spectator to disengage its hot-blooded theme, and this is accomplished without any forcing of the mind or the eye: the sombre Ethiopian vibrancies are implicit in the colors and the essential rhythm of the lines.

C. Bertram Hartman has a canvas entitled "City Blocks" viewed obliquely from above. The looming skyscraper sides lean tottering, and clinging about their waists like frightened children are the crazy edges of farther buildings and slant shafts, while across and between the zig-zag roofs is a foreshortened glimpse of the bay. The artist's inner need for distortion is here well met by the exigencies of the subject itself, by the erratic roof-vista of the huddled city. His eye did not, happily, feel the urge to weigh and assess, but perceived the object with a fine purity of vision.

William Sanger's manner has altered shape since his return from Spain. He appears to be throwing off his early method of painting wholly in low tones, but with mass and solidity; this style was most happily manifest in his "Women of Vigo," sober yet vigorous, strong with the spiritual strength of a half-uttered portentous reticence. His canvas "Penelope Burgess" shows an old woman, with some dark purpureal stuff thrown over her knees, her pale hands busy over her sewing. It betrays a deliberate straying away from the earlier manner which may, in fact, be an advance in technique. Walter Ufer's "June Storm" appears to have been painted in New Mexico and deals with an effect of stark relentless sunlight after rain, sharply etching the contours of the rounded adobe houses and the figures trailing gigantesque shadows on the yellowish ground. Carl Sprinchorn's "Flowers" does not, I believe, quite do justice to the painter's talent. One of the most astonishing failures in the exhibition is the pretentious "Niagara of Adam" by Marie de Jarnet Morris. Both in subject and manner of handling it is strongly reminiscent of Odilon Redon, without quite naturalizing his delicately fantastic and bizarre reach of imagination, without quite winning to his grotesquely mystical mood. Redon would not have left the slightest room for misgiving as to his intent; he would have per-

vaded us with his own cloudy sense of vague undertones and nostalgic yearnings for regions beyond the five senses.

Andrew Dasburg contributes an admirably composed extravaganza which might have been, I think, vastly bettered if the old Gothic lettering had not been just appropriated and pasted on, but painted in suggestively by the artist himself. Outside the three painters mentioned before, Weber, Taylor and Fitch, if I were asked which exhibitors left the most solid and enduring impression, I should unhesitatingly point to the two Japanese, Toshi Shimizu, whose "Tennis Players" is whimsical and delicate, and Yasua Kuniyoshi, whose "Rowing Up Stream" is as fine-grained and imaginative as a rainy landscape by Hiroshige. There is a notable dearth of experimental work in the present showing, which is cause for regret, for the discriminating public has a right to expect courageous path-blazing from its Independent Salons.

## Poem

By IVAN T. DOWELL

It may be  
That the filamented earth  
Is an esoteric sphere  
Within whose spatial concretion  
Ancient images emerge  
And sign with  
Reminiscent obscurity

It may be  
That the earth  
Is an infinite snip  
In the imponderable plenitude  
Of materiality

But I think  
That the earth  
Is a huge ball of dung  
Encompassing the divine larvae  
Deposited by God  
The unknowable Scarabeus



# Reviews

## HOMO SAPIENS

*Fantazius Mallare, by Ben Hecht, with ten drawings and six decorations by Wallace Smith, (Covici-McGee, 1922)*

**F**ANTAZIUS MALLARE is a twentieth century St. George, in combat with the old dragon—sex. He tempts the body to defeat it. He strives to register the absolute freedom of the spirit from all consideration of the senses. But the bodiless being he would create is merely the abortion of his brain. His mania impales his spirit upon the corpse of his physical existence, and the denouement of the narrative but records the complete disintegration of the man and the crucifixion of his soul.

Mallare's obsession becomes an "infatuation with self"—an egomania. He feels "himself the center of life" and he revolts "against all evidences of life" that exist "outside himself". He wants to assert his subjective all in all. As an artist, it is true, he had attempted to give outline to the phenomenal world but this world had enslaved him, by delivering him over to the tyranny of his senses. The crude *golems*, born of the body, that were his handiwork, lacked the emanation of his soul. His art had become the mere "tedious decoration" of his "impotence," the derisions of his ego, the defeats and mockeries rather than the triumphs of his power.

Art thus looms to him not as the greatest achievement of man, but as his greatest failure. He accordingly denies our standards and our values. He views art with irony. He conceives his own

figures as monsters that would possess him and drain him of his self and leave in him but a vacuum of soul. To escape from them, he destroys his work and denies the significance of art.

Now he will end the dualism in him—the Ahriman-Auramazda conflict of Mallare. He had employed the technique of his reason to create an objective reality, which should be an expression of his subjective self. But his objective work was the result of an inorganic method, and his art had become but a caricature of himself. He will now externalize his ego, not through art, but by willing life, directly. The world is himself. He will be not the human, but the divine craftsman.

Ordinarily, this urge in man to create life is attained by a union of the sexes. But Mallare will not associate with a woman for that end. That would be yielding up his ego to another and surrendering himself again to the senses. He alone must be the procreative power. He is himself complete. "I am one," says he, that possesses "the secret of the hermaphroditic gods." As an individuality that is absolute, he cannot desire to possess something outside himself. He does not want to effect his will through Rita and so create through her a form of life. He wishes rather to recreate her—to make her a projection of his will, an externalization of his ego. In his will, she shall be, and she shall be, himself.

Mallare's crazed imagination makes him believe himself to be a God. He will effect his will in Rita. He will re-

create her in his own image. He will cleanse her of sex. Sex is the toxin that consumes him. He therefore tempts Rita with desire to deny it. He fails. Somewhat conscious of his defeat, he flees into the night. In his walk, he comes across a beggar who stretches out his hands to him for alms. His fancy conceives the beggar as Rita, now become synonymous with desire, as following upon his trail, so he kills the man. He returns to his room, where the true Rita awaits him. He believes, of course, that he has killed her and she now appeals to him as a phantom, his own mind has created. He pursues his mad vision relentlessly again. He will purge the phantom of its grossness of sex, too, and make it a pure essence of spirit. Wholly mad, Mallare cannot be disillusioned of his course, but Rita is. Child of nature and passion. that she is, she yet knows that Mallare's madness is against her. Thwarted in the desires of her body she revenges herself upon Mallare, by an orgy with Goliath, the dwarfed, hunchbacked servant, who is the incarnation of lust in the book.

In the end, Mallare knows his absolute defeat. He becomes dimly aware of the fact that his insane imagination has made everything impossible and unreal for him. He has again proved his impotence to create. He knows only pain, the pain of thwarted desire and possession, the pain which is the negation and not the affirmation of life and of the subjective will. He is himself the "pathetic intruder" of his imagination. The desires that nauseate him live like adversaries in him. He cannot establish the harmony of himself. His sword lies

in his lap, the hilt in his hand, ready for use against desire, locked up in the "carnelian" room. Alas, it is his own ego, that is "rutilant" with the red of his room. The room—that is his world. The color of the room is but the reflection of himself, of his desires. His failure with Rita is also his failure with himself. He is Goliath, too—the ape—like Caliban that would be omnipotent and would emulate God. His struggle is futile. To his last despairing cry: "Eli! Eli! Lomo azabtoni?" there can be no answer. Mallare is a man who knows a living death.

We may now ask, what the purpose of the author could have been in this study of a type, seemingly so abnormal, and what his aim may have been in showing us the wild pageant of the senses, against which his protagonist inveighs throughout the narrative. Why this mordant pessimism, unique in American literature?

The answer, it seems to us, is to be found in the view, which would consider the book, as the contribution of a mind skeptical of modern life. The author feels that as we live, we are ravished by the bodies of our existence and that our civilization has failed to establish a harmony of spirit in us. In the last analysis, Mallare but voices the aspirations of the race, the cry of the human that wishes to escape the forces that control him even against his own will, and that hold him down to brute nature, denying him an ascent to divinity. When in his last agony, Mallare feels that in his return to sanity "windows break in him," he yet knows that in the vision that opens "there is no shape". He is but a drifting phantom on the dark

ocean of life. "Pity me," he cries, but only the cross answers him. A spirit of incredible pessimism, as we have said, informs the book.

We must not conclude the essay without some remarks upon the achievement of Wallace Smith. His drawings reveal a master. The book is really one. The artist and author have achieved a rare collaboration in this case. The illustrations speak the very spirit of the book. They are without a doubt, the work of an original talent. The first reveals Mallare, as he prostrates himself upon the roots of things, to discover their meaning. A large tree, "empty of its leaves" gnarled into a fantastic human shape "grimaces" gravely at life, mocking its aspirations. The second represents Mallare, on a fiery-eyed steed, with a halo about his head, speeding in pursuit of his vision. The third shows him on guard at the portals of desire. The fourth represents a huge figure of fate, half seated in a flattened niche of rock, grim, rigid and unbending, looking away into the dark spaces, and giving no concern to the mass of white nude figures, men and women that groan beneath him in their despair. Some of the figures climb up the zig-zag lines of the precipice to him in supplication but there are myriads below, lying helpless in death. The ninth shows the crumbling edifice that is the world of Mallare. He stands in the midst of shrouded figures, the phantasms of his brain and senses, that prey upon him. He stands alone, a white form, tearing away at his chains, with face lifted upward in a cry. The last picture shows Mallare's crucifixion.

The book is beautifully made up. Its title page, its typography, its binding unite to make the mechanical end of the publication a work of excellent craftsmanship. The publishers have certainly produced a rare volume in this book of Fantazius Mallare, their first publication.

SAMUEL POSHEN RUDENS.

## FROM MORN TO MIDNIGHT

By GEORG KAISER

(*Brentano's* 1922)

I AM not sure I know what an expressionist play is. I saw a dress rehearsal of "The Hairy Ape" at the Provincetown Theatre and I have read "From Morn to Midnight"; both of which plays are expressionist, or, at least labelled such; and I have seen "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari," an expressionist "movie", which, being in a different category, is, probably, beside the point.

Perhaps an expressionist play is one in which a central character moves through a number of short scenes. At least, "The Hairy Ape" and "From Morn to Midnight" are alike in that in each a central character moves through a number of short scenes. In this they resemble "Hamlet" and "Macbeth".

Perhaps an expressionist play is one in which the central character defies an environment ultimately to be crushed by it; and this defiance and defeat constitute a theme, imply a thesis. This is true of both "The Hairy Ape" and "From Morn to Midnight." And it is true also of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth." So that I am forced to conclude: either that I don't know what an expressionist



play is; or that "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" are expressionist...

Unless, perhaps, an expressionist play is a play which is produced in an expressionist manner...

If this last be true, anyone who has not seen "From Morn to Midnight" produced, as I have not, is little qualified to discuss its expressionism. There are some things which may be said about it simply as a play.

It is in seven scenes; and it is a play primarily for the theatre, an acting play. Briefly, it shows what happens to and inside of a cashier from the time in the morning when he embezzles a large sum of money up to midnight when he shoots himself to prevent his capture by the police.

The first scene is the interior of a provincial bank. The cashier is in his cage. A beautiful lady enters and proffers a letter of credit. She wants three thousand marks. The manager of the bank refuses—the letter of advice from her bank in Florence not having arrived. The manager thinks she is an adventuress. She returns later and asks the cashier if her letter has arrived. He helps her fasten her wrist watch. When she has gone, he gets the clerk and the porter out of the way by a ruse, and cramming sixty thousand in notes and gold into his pocket walks out of the bank. The manager comes in with the letter of advice for the lady.

The second scene is the writing room of a hotel. The cashier comes to the beautiful lady, tells her what has happened, shows her the money and proposes that they flee together. The lady, who is perfectly respectable, and the mother of a grown-up son, is surprised;

then annoyed. When she proposes to ring for her son, the cashier leaves her without further argument.

The third scene is a field deep in snow. A cloud on the horizon turns into a skeleton and back again. It is a symbol of what waits for the cashier at the end of his day.

The fourth scene is the parlor in the cashier's house. He returns for a last visit to his wife, his aged mother, and his two daughters. When he has left, the manager of the bank rushes in looking for the thief.

In the next two scenes, the cashier is spending the sixty thousand. The fifth scene is the steward's box of a velodrome during a cycle race meeting. Unlike the chariot race in "Ben Hur," the cycle races occur off scene. The Cashier, in evening clothes, offers a prize of a thousand marks. A race is run for it. One of the riders is killed. The spectators are in a frenzy of excitement. The Cashier offers a second prize: fifty thousand. The race for it is to occur immediately some Royal Highness is in its box. The Royal Highness enters its box and the stewards are obsequiously bowing, when the Cashier changes his mind and knocking a hole in the silk hat of one of the stewards rushes out. The sixth scene is the private supper room in a cabaret. The Cashier brings in two maskers. When they unmask, he is disappointed and drives the girls out. He comes in later with another girl. He wants her to dance for him. She refuses. When he offers a roll of bank notes, she explains that she has a wooden leg. He upsets a champagne cooler over her and drives her out. The Cashier is disillusioned with riches.

The sixth and last scene is a Salvation Army hall. The Cashier is led in by a Salvation Army lass. Exalted by the music and the confessions of several penitents, the Cashier scatters the remnant of his bank roll on the floor of the hall. The penitents and onlookers scramble for the money. Only the Salvation Army lass stands aloof. The Cashier confesses his theft. The Salvation Army lass slips out and returns with the police, saying "There he is! I've shown him to you! I've earned the reward."

The Cashier is at last alone without any illusion. The police switch off the lights. The Cashier shoots himself. The lights are switched on. The Cashier is seen dying. The lights go out again with a loud report. And a policeman exclaims: "There must be a short circuit in the main."

It is a play without talk for talk's sake and no epigrams.

LOUIS GILMORE.

### INDELIBLE

By ELLIOT PAUL

(Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1922)

**M**ISS Stoddard lives in a little house across the street and head wiggles a bit, especially when she thinks. She is 'queer' and has no husband."

"She was alone. Alone. How strange that a girl should be alone with people walking all over Green street. They did not know how near a corpse they were."

In such paragraphs does Elliot Paul give, in "Indelible," signs of a gift rare in American writers—the gift of expression that is annually crowned by the French Academies. There are gleams

of genius, even, throughout the volume and if the author learns that careful writing is more to be commended than much speed, his next book may fulfill the promise given in this, his first.

Samuel, of ordinary New England stock, and Lena, a Jewess from Russia are regarded by God—Paul's conception of the Creator at a roll-top desk is as amazing as some of H. G. Wells' characterizations—as among those whom He might as well let live, for they cannot be erased by the fires and floods of human trials. But, it was a cheap trick to make this girl, lover of the violin, lose her precious fingers in a melodramatic accident. Racial prejudices would have provided all the conflict needed, especially when handled by Paul who sees poignant tragedy re-acting in the most commonplace emotions.

For instance: "As usual I started for Boston and walked and walked the streets.... I see hats like Lena's. I hurry to catch them, hoping every time. She is never there. Everywhere are clothes like hers.... It is hard for me to see at a long distance. I ought to get different glasses."

There shines the genius of the man. As it also shines in his ability to leave untouched those things that he cannot fathom, such as the thoughts of Lena's father, the old Jewish rag-man. What goes on in the bowed head, the author asks. And he answers: "Your guess is as good as another's."

The old, bent peddler, crying "Rakees" through our street seems more alive since Paul's portrayal, but just as baffling.

And that is the secret of this book. It holds our interest from first to last;



it sends living people into our lives, whom we will not forget, but it baffles by the very art that gives us just so much of these people as we would know, had we met them in the flesh instead of in this book, and that is life.

LOUISE H. GUYOL.

## THE BRIGHT SHAWL

By JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER  
(*Alfred A. Knopf, 1922*)

**M**R. HERGESHEIMER employs a new, for him, method of attack in "The Bright Shawl", similar to the cut-back so popular with our eminent writers of moving picture scenarios. Not that it was left to the movie-writers to devise this excellent scheme for telling a tale; their function was merely to familiarize it to the great unread, and so successful have they been that we know just what to expect when an aged gentleman, or perhaps he may only be middle-aged, leans back in his chair, closes his eyes, and allows a tenderly reminiscent smile to play across his mobile features.

Hergesheimer's hero, in this last novel of his, follows exactly this order of procedure. A few reflections anent the lack of emotionalism of the young generation, occasioned by the departure of his nephew, a veteran of the late over-used war, and a strain of Liszt's Spanish Rhapsody drifting in from a neighborhood piano, and Charles Abbot forgets forty intervening years, and relives his romantic adventurings in the Cuban struggle for independence.

A less romantic young prig than Charles Abbot it would be hard to imagine. The author uses many words to portray the intensity, the heat and the

passion of the boy, but we are not convinced. In fact, Charles goes through the pages, not a fiery young rebel, but an unbearably dogmatic little puppet, mouthing lofty sentiments about liberty and patriotism, in the automatic fashion in which people, two or three years ago, stood up when they heard "The Star-Spangled Banner".

Despite this, however, the story is interesting. The pictures sometimes are glowing. The women are unusual. Mr. Hergesheimer's women are never like our sisters or our cousins or our wives; they make even our mistresses seem prosaic. Narcisa, La Clavel, Pilar de Lima are more wonderful creatures than you or I could ever hope to meet with, but one after another, they lie in wait for Charles, who manages to resist them all. Narcisa, I think, could have been the most charming of all of Hergesheimer's feminine creations.

But all in all I should say, the most colorful part of "The Bright Shawl" is the paper cover in which Mr. Knopf, with his unfailing artistry, has clothed the book.

ADALINE KATZ.

## BABEL

By JOHN CURNOS  
(*Boni & Liveright, 1922*)

**A**FTER reading "Babel" I seem to feel that it is the sort of novel that will not be gobbled up by the bookmen. Somehow it is too *good*, too chock full of meat and originality, and, besides, too dismal in its sincerity.

John Gombarov is so kind, so faithful to his gods, and in his affair with Winifred, such a hopeless failure, I fear the great mass of gentle readers will at



once forsake him for their more cherished he-men who conquer Latin-American republics, not to mention the girl and all her father's millions.

But let alone the sad Russian and his amours that come to nothing, "Babel" cannot afford to be missed. It is something of what the copy writers for the publishers call a "throbbing" novel. Throbbing with a live picture of London; live and real, and at the same time with a thin, not overwrought, satirical tone that is thoroughly satisfying. London or Babel, as Cournos visualizes it, passes before us as a three-ring circus once did before our astounded boyhood

eyes. Only instead of the grand illusions of rajahs and bespangled ladies on white horses, we feel the actuality of great men, down-at-the-heel artists, "Reds," Cockneys, fancy girls, militant suffragists and Gombarov himself.

Mr. Cournos has done modern London in a fashion superior to most of his predecessors. Arnold Bennett struck the note and painted the picture with an altogether engaging style, but the author of "Babel" has surpassed Bennett in a sense, I think. He has reached further beneath the surface of things—more especially, beneath the surface of people.

ALBERT GOLDSTEIN.

## Dagmar

By YVONNE JUVENAL

She seemeth  
As a virgin,  
Yet she hath  
The dark timbre  
Of a rich soil  
Deeply tilled.

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